



Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson

Nathaniel Smith, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health

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In light of on-going COVID-19 concerns and Governor Hutchinson's recent State of Emergency Declaration, the Arkansas Department of Health recommends **voluntary suspension of all non-emergency or non-urgent care or services to patients until further notice**. This recommendation is subject to change at the discretion of the Governor and Secretary of Health.

The only care or services to be provided at this time should be emergency or urgent in nature.

Arkansas Department of Health recommends that procedures, testing, and office visits that can be safely postponed should be rescheduled to an appropriate future date. Delaying treatment is especially recommended for high-risk patients who meet any of the following criteria:

- Patients and visitors who have a temperature of 100.4° F or greater, cough, or other symptoms of COVID-19
- Aged 65 and older
- Have compromised immune systems and/or present with chronic disease (ASA 2 and above)
- Returned from international travel within past 14 days

Universal precautions are to be strictly followed in order to minimize the possibility of disease transmission. Here are several suggestions:

- Magazines and children's toys be removed from your waiting room areas to help prevent the spread of the virus.
- Providing a single sign-in sheet per patient and/or sanitizing digital screens and/or stylus after each patient.
- Make sure your office is being sanitized more frequently and making sure that exam tables, rooms, etc., are being sanitized after each patient.
- Instruct your patients and staff to practice social distancing in the waiting room and/or have some wait in their cars or work out some other alternative waiting room procedure.
- Work from home if it is an option.
- Consider providing telehealth to reduce contact with patients.

- Stay abreast of current recommendations of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in addition to individual practice groups.
- Be aware of your facility guidelines as we work in such varied positions and they are continuously changing.

Patients with an acute respiratory illness may present for treatment. It may not be possible to know the cause of any patient's illness so it is important to follow this guidance and standard precautions at all times. When at all possible, treatment of symptomatic patients should be postponed.

- Patients with an acute respiratory illness should be identified at check-in and placed in a single-patient room with the door kept closed.
- Seek to prevent the transmission of respiratory infections in healthcare settings by adhering to respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette
- Offer a disposable surgical mask to persons who are coughing; and provide tissues and no-touch receptacles for used tissue disposal.
- Ill persons should wear a surgical mask when outside the patient room.
- Personnel assessing a patient with influenza-like or other respiratory illness should wear disposable surgical facemask*, non-sterile gloves, gown, and eye protection (e.g., goggles) to prevent exposure.
- Patient and workers should perform hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic hand wash) after possible contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.
- Routine cleaning and disinfection strategies used during influenza seasons can be applied to the environmental management for COVID-19. More information can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/gl_enviroinfection.html

Collective actions taken by the community can help deter the proliferation of the COVID-19 virus in Arkansas. By rescheduling elective procedures, professionals can do our part to prevent community spread, as well as help to preserve the limited supply of personal protective equipment that is critical for frontline healthcare personnel responding to this pandemic.

ADH has activated a call center to answer questions from health care providers and the public about the novel coronavirus. During normal business hours (8:00am – 4:30pm), urgent and non-urgent calls, please call 1-800-803-7847 or email ADH.CoronaVirus@arkansas.gov.

For the most up-to-date information and support, visit our website: www.healthy.arkansas.gov

For the most up-to-date information and guidance on COVID-19 in Arkansas, visit: <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus>